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1763 - 1844

Charles XIV John
of Sweden 1814

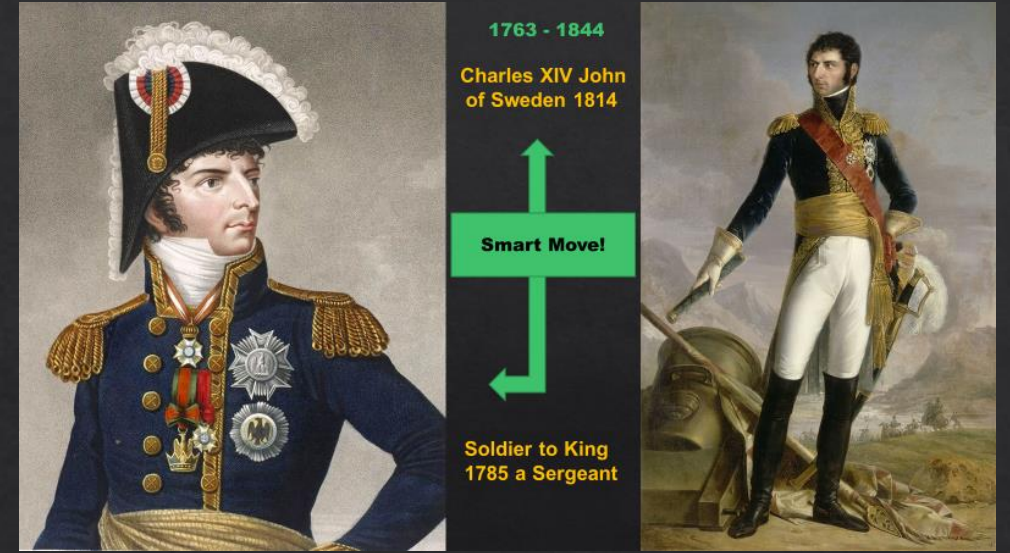
Smart Move!

Soldier to King
1785 a Sergeant



For a man who would later become a king, Bernadotte was **staunchly anti-royal** in his youth. When the French Revolution erupted in 1789, Bernadotte was among the many who sided with the new Jacobin republican regime. **According to some sources, he even had "death to all kings" tattooed on his arm.**

Bernadotte distinguished himself and rose through the ranks during France's subsequent wars. He remained a Jacobin sympathizer, even as France shifted back toward monarchy under Napoleon.



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Born in Pau in southern France, Bernadotte joined the French Royal Army in 1780. Following the outbreak of the French Revolution, he exhibited great military talent, rapidly rising through the ranks, and was made a brigadier general by 1794. He served with distinction in Italy and Germany, and was briefly Minister of War. His relationship with Napoleon was turbulent; nevertheless, Napoleon named him a Marshal of the Empire on the proclamation of the French Empire. Bernadotte played a significant role in the French victory at Austerlitz, and was made Prince of Pontecorvo as a reward. Bernadotte was, through marriage to Désirée Clary, brother-in-law to Joseph Bonaparte, and thus a member of the extended Imperial family.



CHARLES XIV JOHN

In 1810, Bernadotte was unexpectedly elected the heir-presumptive (Crown Prince) to the childless King Charles XIII of Sweden, thanks to the advocacy of Baron Carl Otto Mörner, a Swedish courtier and obscure member of the Riksdag of the Estates. He assumed the name Charles John and was named regent, and generalissimo of the Swedish Armed Forces, soon after his arrival becoming de facto head of state for most of his time as Crown Prince.

In 1813, following the sudden unprovoked French invasion of Swedish Pomerania, Crown Prince Charles John was instrumental in the creation of the Sixth Coalition by allying with Tsar Alexander and using Swedish diplomacy to bring warring Russia and Britain together in alliance. He then authored the Trachenberg Plan, the war winning Allied campaign plan, and commanded the Allied Army of the North that defeated two concerted French attempts to capture Berlin and made the decisive attack on the last day of the catastrophic French defeat at Leipzig.

After the War of the Sixth Coalition, Charles John forced King Frederick VI of Denmark to cede Norway to Sweden, leading to the Swedish–Norwegian War of 1814 where Norway was defeated after a single summer's conflict. This put Norway into a union with Sweden, which lasted for almost a century before being peacefully dissolved in 1905. The Swedish–Norwegian war is credited as Sweden's last direct conflict and war.

Upon the death of Charles XIII in 1818, Charles John ascended to the thrones. He presided over a period of peace and prosperity, and reigned until his death in 1844.



BERNADOTTE'S BIRTHPLACE IN PAU, FRANCE

Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was born on 26 January 1763 in Pau, the capital of the province of Béarn in the southwestern part of the Kingdom of France. He was the son of Jean Henri Bernadotte (1711–1780), prosecutor at Pau, and his wife (married at Boeil, 20 February 1754) Jeanne de Saint-Jean (1728–1809), niece of the lay abbot of Sireix. The family name was originally du Poey (or de Pouey), but was changed to

Bernadotte—a surname of an ancestress at the beginning of the 17th century. He was the youngest of five siblings, two of whom died in childhood. Soon after his birth, Baptiste was added to his name, to distinguish him from his elder brother Jean Évangéliste. Bernadotte himself added Jules to his first names as a tribute to the French Empire under Napoleon I.

At the age of 14, he was apprenticed to a local attorney. However, the death of his father when Bernadotte was just 17 stopped the youth from following his father's career.

Pau, Pyrénées-Atlantiques



Born



EARLY MILITARY CAREER

Bernadotte joined the army as a private in the Régiment Royal–La Marine on 3 September 1780, and first served in the newly conquered territory of Corsica. Subsequently, the Régiment stationed in Besançon, Grenoble, Vienne, Marseille and Île de Ré. He reached the rank of sergeant in August 1785 and was nicknamed Sergeant Belle-Jambe, for his smart appearance. In early 1790 he was promoted to Adjutant-Major, the highest rank for non-commissioned officers in the Ancien Régime.

REVOLUTIONARY WARS

Following the outbreak of the French Revolution, his eminent military qualities brought him speedy promotion. Bernadotte's promotions came both from the esteem of his commanders as well as from his men; having been elected to the rank of lieutenant colonel and colonel by his men, though he refused both nominations in favor of traditional advancement.

It was during this period of rapid advancement that the military qualities he became known for, daring assaults and gasconades, came to the fore. Of the latter, Bernadotte was gifted in his ability to inspire his men to prodigious feats of valor. As Colonel and commander of the 71st Demi-Brigade, Bernadotte rallied his men, who were retreating in disorder before an Austrian attack, by tearing off his epaulettes, throwing them to the ground before his men and shouting “If you dishonor yourselves by flight, I refuse to remain your colonel!” Soldiers left the ranks, gathered his epaulettes, pressed them into his hands, formed ranks and reformed the line and counter-attacked.

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Battle of Valmy.



The French moved first declaring war on Austria on April 20, 1792.

By 1794 he was promoted to brigadier, attached to the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse. After Jourdan's victory at Fleurus (26 June 1794), where he distinguished himself with a decisive attack and seizure of key terrain that led to the Austrian retreat, he then became a divisional general.

Bernadotte played key roles throughout the next 18 months during the three French invasions into Germany; often employed in the place of honor during offensives leading the vanguard, and in retreat as a defensive specialist commanding the rearguard.

At the Battle of Theiningen (1796), where the Austrians outnumbered the French three-to-one, Bernadotte's rearguard successfully repulsed numerous attacks while inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, preventing the Archduke Charles from cutting off the retreat of the French army over the Rhine after its defeat by the Austrians at the Battle of Würzburg. At the beginning of 1797 he was ordered by the Directory to march with 20,000 men as reinforcements to Napoleon Bonaparte's army in Italy. His successful crossing of the Alps through the storm in midwinter was highly praised but coldly received by the Italian Army. Upon receiving insult from Dominique Martin Dupuy, the commander of Milan, Bernadotte was to arrest him for insubordination. However, Dupuy was a close friend of Louis-Alexandre Berthier and this started a long-lasting feud between Bernadotte and Napoleon's Chief of Staff.

He had his first interview with Napoleon in Mantua and was appointed the commander of the 4th division. During the invasion of Friuli and Istria, Bernadotte distinguished himself greatly at the passage of the Tagliamento where he led the vanguard, and at the capture of the fortress of Gradisca (19 March 1797). After the 18th Fructidor, Napoleon ordered his generals to collect from their respective divisions' addresses in favor of the coup d'état of that day; but Bernadotte sent an address to the directory different from that which Napoleon wished for and without conveying it through Napoleon's hands.

After returning from Vienna, he resided in Paris. He married Désirée Clary in August 1798, the daughter of a Marseilles merchant and Joseph Bonaparte's sister-in-law. In November of the same year he was made commander of the army of observation on the upper Rhine. Although solicited to do so by Barras and Joseph Bonaparte, he did not take part in the coup d'état of the 30th Prairial. From 2 July to 14 September he was Minister of War, in which capacity he displayed great ability. However, his popularity and contacts with radical Jacobins aroused antipathy towards him in the government. On the morning of 13 September he found his resignation announced in the *Moniteur* before he was aware that he had tendered it. This was a trick; played upon him by Sieyès and Roger Ducos, the directors allied to Napoleon



Bernardine Eugénie Désirée Clary (8 November 1777 – 17 December 1860), in Swedish officially Eugenia Bernhardina Desideria, was Queen of Sweden and Norway as the wife of King Charles XIV John, a former French general and founder of the House of Bernadotte. She was the mother of Oscar I, and one-time fiancée of Napoleon Bonaparte. She officially changed her name there to Desideria, which she did not use herself



Oscar I, born 4 july 1799 in Paris, dead 8 july 1859 in Stockholms castle in Stockholm, King of Sweden and Norway from 1844 to 1859.

His son Oscar I

The Citadel of Besançon by Vauban





On the introduction of the **First French Empire**, Bernadotte became one of the **eighteen Marshals of the Empire**, and from June 1804 to September 1805 served as governor of the recently occupied Hanover. In this capacity, as well as during his later command of the army of northern Germany, he created for himself a reputation for independence, moderation, and administrative ability.

Marshal of the Empire

Marshal of the Empire was a civil dignity during the First French Empire. It was created by Sénatus-consulte on 18 May 1804 and to a large extent resurrected the formerly abolished title of Marshal of France. According to the Sénatus-consulte, a Marshal was a grand officer of the Empire, entitled to a high-standing position at the Court and to the presidency of an electoral college.



Napoleon and several of his Marshals (recognisable due to their white-feathered bicornes) at the Battle of Borodino in 1812. Painting by Vasily Vereshchagin.

He declined to help Napoleon Bonaparte stage his coup d'état of November 1799 but nevertheless accepted employment from the Consulate, and from April 1800 to 18 August 1801 commanded the army in the Vendée and successfully restored its tranquility.

In 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte proposed that Bernadotte head to New France to serve as governor of Louisiana, which was to be transferred back to French control following the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso. In accepting the position, Bernadotte requested additional soldiers, settlers, and funding to support the colony, but Napoleon refused. In response, Bernadotte declined the posting and instead was named plenipotentiary ambassador to the United States. His posting was cancelled, however, after the Sale of Louisiana.



The Battle of Austerlitz was fought December 2, 1805, and was the deciding engagement of the War of the Third Coalition (1805) during the Napoleonic Wars (1803 to 1815).



During the campaign against Prussia, in the same year, he was severely reproached by Napoleon for not participating with his army corps in the battles of Jena and Auerstädt (14 October 1806). Napoleon, on the night of 13 October, thinking he had faced the whole Prussian army at Jena, sent orders to Bernadotte and Davout to fall back from Naumburg and get across the Prussian line of retreat. In pursuance of these orders, Bernadotte, separately from Davout, left Naumburg at dawn on the morning of the 14th for Dornburg and marched towards Apolda, which he reached by 16:00. Hampered by the very poor state of the roads, he could not engage in the Battle of Jena, though he effectively compelled the Prussians to retreat from both battlefields by posting his troops on the heights of Apolda.

After the Battle of Jena, Bernadotte crushed the Prussian Reserve Army, all fresh troops fortified behind a marsh and the River Saale, under Duke Eugen of Württemberg at Halle (17 October 1806), though Imperial Headquarters did not much appreciate this victory. When visiting Halle after the battle, and commenting on the degree of difficulty of storming a fortified position accessible only by a single bridge, Napoleon enigmatically commented "Bernadotte stops at nothing. Someday the Gascon will get caught." Subsequently, Bernadotte pursued, conjointly with Soult and Murat (known as the "Pursuit of the Three Marshals"), Prussian general Blücher's Corps to Lübeck, where his troops stormed the Prussian defenses, taking the city and forcing Blücher's capitulation at Radkow (7 November 1806). When the French forced their way to Lübeck, the city became the target of large-scale looting and rampage by the French soldiers. Bernadotte, struggling desperately to prevent his men from sacking, was given six horses from the Council of Lübeck as their appreciation. He also treated captured Swedish soldiers with courtesy and allowed them to return to their home country. The impressed Swedes went home with a tale of Bernadotte's fairness in maintaining order within the city.



The Battle of Friedland was fought June 14, 1807, during the War of the Fourth Coalition (1806-1807).



Napoleon on the field at the Battle of Eylau.



Official uniform of a Marshal of the Empire. It was designed by painter Jean-Baptiste Isabey and designer Charles Percier.

Napoleon fired Bernadotte

The Battle of Wagram in 1809 was one of Napoleon's last great successes. But at one point in the battle, it seemed as if his Austrian enemies might prevail. They overwhelmed a portion Napoleon's army - a portion led by Bernadotte. As Bernadotte galloped to get ahead of his fleeing troops in order to rally them, he was spotted in what looked like outright flight by his commander.

Napoleon reportedly said to the unlucky marshal, **"I herewith remove you from command of the corps which you have handled so consistently badly. Leave my presence immediately and quit the Grand Armee within twenty-four hours."**



With **Bernadotte having returned to Paris**, the Walcheren expedition (July 1809) caused the French ministry in the absence of the emperor to entrust him with the defense of Antwerp with both regular French and Dutch troops along with the National Guard. Bernadotte, with his customary skill, took command of a chaotic situation wherein troops from all over the Empire and its vassal states, and raw conscripts, were sent to Holland under divided command. He re-organized and trained his forces, named by the Emperor as the Army of Antwerp, by instilling discipline in old soldiers too long at the depots and teaching raw conscripts their trade.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_XIV_John_of_Sweden#/media/File:Statyn_av_Karl_XIV_Johan_Norrk%C3%B6ping_april_2006.jpg

In 1810 Bernadotte was about to enter his new post as governor of Rome when he was unexpectedly **elected the heir-presumptive to King Charles XIII of Sweden**. The problem of Charles' successor had been acute almost from the time he had ascended the throne a year earlier, as it was apparent that the Swedish branch of the House of Holstein-Gottorp would die with him. He was 61 years old and in poor health. He was also childless; Queen Charlotte had given birth to two children who had died in infancy, and there was no prospect of her bearing another child. The king had adopted a Danish prince, Charles August, as his son soon after his coronation, but he had died just a few months after his arrival. Despite the fact that Napoleon favored his ally Danish King Frederick VI, Danish Prince Frederick Christian initially had the most support to become Swedish Crown Prince as well

The Swedish court initially sounded out the emperor for his preferences on candidates for crown prince, whereupon Napoleon made it clear he preferred his son-in-law Eugène de Beauharnais, one of his nephews or one of his brothers. However, Eugène, serving as viceroy in Italy, did not wish to convert to Lutheranism, a prerequisite for accepting the Swedish offer. Moreover, none of Napoleon's brothers was interested in going to Sweden and his nephews were too young as the Swedes did not want the hazards of minority rule in the event King Charles died prematurely. The matter was decided by an obscure Swedish courtier, son of Baron Gustav Mörner, a commander of the Swedish force captured by Bernadotte at Lübeck, Baron Karl Otto Mörner, who, entirely on his own initiative, offered the succession to the Swedish crown to Bernadotte. Bernadotte communicated Mörner's offer to Napoleon who at first treated the situation as an absurdity, but later came around to the idea and diplomatically and financially supported Bernadotte's candidacy.

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Coat of Arms of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte



Arms of the House of Bernadotte



Coronation of Karl III Johan as King of Norway in Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim



Equestrian in
Stockholm depicting
Charles XIV John.

Death

On 26 January 1844, his 81st birthday, Charles John was found unconscious in his chambers having suffered a stroke. While he regained consciousness, he never fully recovered and died on the afternoon of 8 March. On his deathbed, he was heard to say:

"Nobody has had a career in life like mine. I could perhaps have been able to agree to become Napoleon's ally: but when he attacked the country that had placed its fate in my hands, he could find in me no other than an opponent. The events that shook Europe and that gave her back her freedom are known. It is also known which part I played in that.



1844



